

CAD-3D Reviewed

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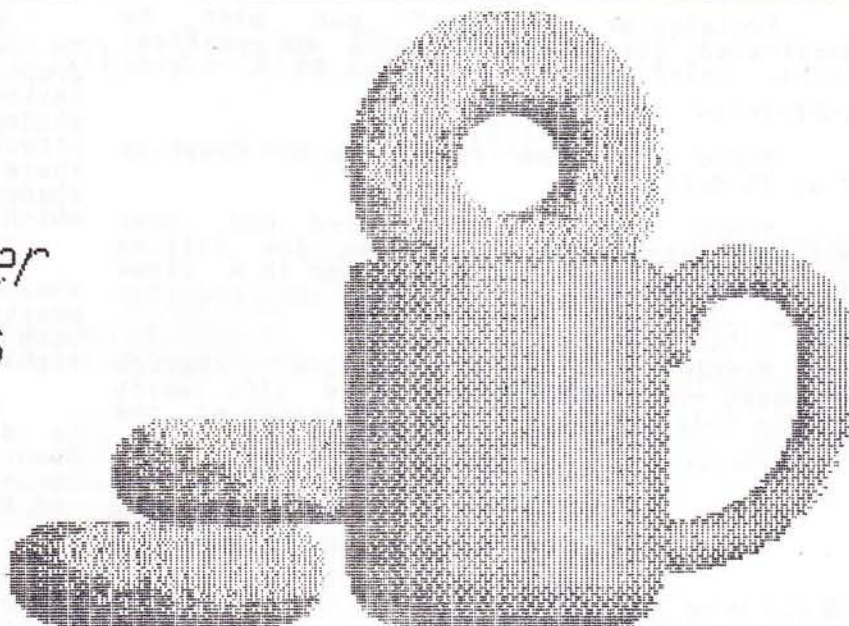
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Solid Object Module

RAMbrandt: real Graphics Power for 8-bit Artists

by Jim Hood



Rambrandt is a paint program for the 8-bit Ataris. It works with Atari Graphics Modes 7+16, 9, 10, 11 and 15+16 (7½) and is one of the most versatile paint programs for either the 8 or 16-bit Ataris. It is written in Forth and uses a Forth disk layout, rather than normal Atari DOS file management; however it also allows drawings to be loaded and saved as DOS files compatible with *Micro Illustrator* (Koala and Atari touch tablets) *Micro Painter*, *Movie Maker* backgrounds and *Typesetter* picture loads. Drawing can be done with a joystick or an Atari or Koala touch tablet.

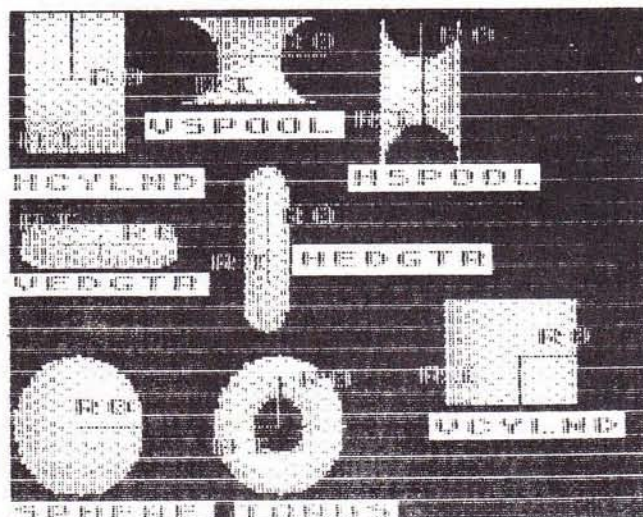
In addition to the normal boxes, lines, circles and so forth that we have come to expect from paint programs, *Rambrandt* has an airbrush mode and sophisticated color controls, uses standard format screen fonts does "mirror" drawing, allows user designed patterns, has scaling, animation, flipping ... and now there is even a separate disk available from *Antic* containing a module to produce any of eight shaded, solid object primitives which can then be altered with the regular *Rambrandt* controls. The eight primitives are sphere, torus and vertical and horizontal cylinders, spools and torus edges. The *Solid Object Module* only works with a joystick and the keyboard.

Rambrandt pictures can be output to Epson, C. Itoh, Prowriter or Okimate 10 compatible printers. The Okimate 10 can print up to 46 color patterns on one picture, but takes about 20 minutes to do so. The Epson and Prowriter can print up to 16 shades in GTIA modes 9 and 11.

I like the ability of *Rambrandt* to handle display list interrupts so that more than four colors are available in Graphics 7 and 7½. *Fun With Art* is the only other Atari paint or drawing program I know of which allows the user to modify the screen palette on separate raster lines. *Rambrandt* allows up to 90 interrupts per picture, on evenly numbered vertical lines.

Rambrandt has more color control options than any other program I have seen. Colors can be mixed in "random" patterns, where the user presets the percentage of each color register. Colors can be changed using normal fill methods, or by selecting an "Exclusive/Or" option, which performs a logical EOR with the screen pixels and the active brush color. There is also a "Hunt" option which will put the brush color over only one of the other color registers. Thus the user can draw in an area without covering all the existing work. Drawing can be done with a joystick or an Atari or Koala touch tablet.

There is a "Scaling" option which will take a rectangular area, chosen from one part of the screen and fit it into another rectangular area, of different size, on another part of the screen. With the "Stamp" option one area of the screen can be repeatedly copied to other parts of the screen.

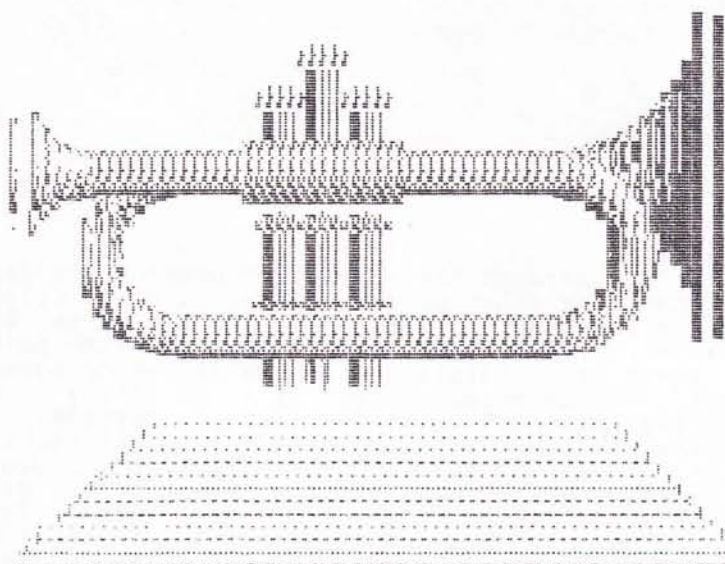


Rectangular "Windows" can also be designated for doing horizontal or vertical flips, color wipes, rotations in 5 degree increments, and animations.

There is a "Zoom" feature in the Graphics 7 or 7½ modes.

There are both predefined and user defined patterns to choose from for filling and drawing. Text can be printed in 4 sizes and an "Undo" option will cancel any previous basic operation.

Drawing options are selected through keyboard input or from a command line which can be toggled on or off at the bottom of the screen.



Color registers are selected from a color bar at the top of the screen, which also toggles on and off.

As with most programs, *Rambrandt* can be difficult to use initially but becomes easier with practice. It comes as two disks of programs and instructions. The main program is on one disk side and another side has three "modules" which are separate programs to be loaded into the main program when needed. Two of these are printer controls and the other is for loading and saving pictures in the regular Atari DOS format.

If you are like me, you will need to print out the instructions for easy reference.

The *Solid Object Module* and its instructions are available on a separate disk, which also has a patch program to allow use of the Atari touch tablet stylus button. The size and screen location for any shape in *The Solid Object Module* can be set by the user but the objects are always drawn "head-on". This makes the module much more limited in its usefulness than a program like *CAD-3D*, which allows both objects and the viewing angle to be moved in relation to a three dimensional matrix. However, once an object is created with *The Solid Object Module*, it can then be altered with the standard *Rambrandt* functions, such as rotate, scale, flip and so forth.

Shading of the solid objects can be done in several ways and depends some on the graphics mode that is being used. For instance, there is an option which uses 16 shades or colors. This would only be effective in Atari Graphics Mode 9 and 11. There are also options which give 8 or 4 shades and "Dither" and "Random" options which give various mixes of two colors.

The *Solid Object Module* calculates shading requirements by assuming a main light positioned over the viewer's right shoulder with the option of adding a second, back light.

One caution - with its ability to write to disks in either a Forth or DOS format, *Rambrandt* can overwrite normally protected areas of a disk, if the disk is in one format and *Rambrandt* is writing in the other.

In summary, *Rambrandt* is a powerful paint program for the 8-bit Atari line and *The Solid Object Module* is an interesting, but more limited addition to it.

A Printer for a Dollar?

by James Moran

Does that sound like a come-on? Well in one sense it is, and in another it isn't. Someone will go home from the August 5 SLCC meeting with a real sharp ATARI 825 printer for a dollar.

By now you have probably guessed that the printer is to be raffled off at the SLCC August main meeting. The raffle tickets are \$1 each and are not rationed, so you may purchase as many as you like. The funds collected will go to the club money hoarder for counting.

This Atari 825 printer had died a very quiet death and one of our real nice members donated the earthly remains to the club for disposition. The club mortician (BOB BARTON) thought he detected a sign of life in this bag of earthly remains and contacted the club 825 doctor (DAN CHUN) who, after a complete workup, diagnosed the cadaver as revivable. After Doctor Dan acquired the latest graphics chip, surgically implanted it in the carcass and reworked other miscellaneous and sundry parts and boards, there has arisen from the ashes a first class 825 printer with the newest graphics chip and the best graphics software ready to be raffled to some fortunate person.

For those unfortunate few who have not owned or operated an official ATARI 825 printer, let me assure you that this workhorse of a printer with its funny ribbon will probably outlive us all and is surely worth a dollar. So to make our money hoarder (LOL HANSEN) happy, come to the meeting and buy ticket.

LOGO Screen Dump from Down Under

I read with interest Arthur Banks article last issue and thought that there must be a way to dump LOGO screens from within the program itself. So I put my MAC65 cartridge in the computer and went to work. The result is a screen dump program which resides in memory with LOGO and can be called at any time to dump screens to a GEMINI 10X or EPSON printer.

The biggest problem with mixing machine language with LOGO is finding somewhere to put the ML program in memory. Since there is little documentation concerning memory usage, I had to find out myself using a LOGO routine.

All of the spaces I found were too small to hold the ML routine and printer buffer so I had to split it. The main program is hidden in the DOS drive and data buffers. It starts at location 7200 (\$1C20) which is above normal usage unless you are using two drives. If you use drive 2 from LOGO then you may wipe out the ML printer routine. The printer buffer is located high in memory at location 32512 (\$7F00) or 1 page below RQAMTOP. It is unprotected so large LOGO programs may be affected by this. As yet I have not had any difficulties. If you have problems, it is possible to protect this area. LOGO uses its own pointers to keep track of memory, NOT location 106.

The screen memory is in the middle of RAM and there are approximately 25 pages below this and 50 above it. Locations 14268 and 14271 are the LOWEM and HIGHM pointers of the lower bank of NODESPACE and 14269 and 14270 do the same job for the second bank above screen memory. By altering 14270, it is possible to protect the printer buffer which takes only one page. Till now, I haven't found this necessary. If you do, make sure it is done at the beginning when LOGO is booted. Simply use the .DEPOSIT command. Each of these pointers is only one byte long - the high byte.

When you have your program up and running, there are a couple of interesting details concerning the manipulation of the screen display and printer output from within LOGO.

The .SETSCR command can be used to make your shapes appear much more accurate. The setting in the US is .SETSCR .8 but PAL systems are set to .SETSCR 1. Actually, I found .9 produced the most accurate squares on my printer.

COLOR settings also make a difference to your printout. There are three different pens that the turtles use and each of these produces a different pattern on the printer. SETPN2 will produce the darkest lines while 0 and 1 produce similar lighter lines. This can be effective in showing where the turtle has been on the screen as seen in the MAP printout.

(The listing following this article is a BASIC program which will make an AUTORUN.SYS file on D:1 -- follow screen prompts

by John Latham
(Queensland, Australia)
reprinted from June's ACE (N.S.W.)

```

1 REM *****
2 REM # LOGO - DUMPING GRAPHICS #
3 REM # by John Latham #
4 REM # Published by Atari Computer #
5 REM # Enthusiasts (N.S.W.) #
6 REM # June 1986 #
7 REM *****
100 DIM A$(1)
110 ? "M":? "?: "INSERT A FORMATTED DOS
2 DISK"
120 ? "?:? "PRESS RETURN WHEN READY";
:INPUT A$
130 OPEN #1,8,0,"D:AUTORUN.SYS":X=0:RE
STORE 2000
140 READ A:IF A=-1 THEN CLOSE #1:GOTO
200
150 X=X+1:PUT #1,A:GOTO 140
200 IF X=221 THEN END
210 ? "?:? "INCORRECT NUMBER OF DATA
STATEMENTS"
2000 DATA 255,255,32,28,229,28,169,27,
141,0,127,141,3,127,169,65,141,1,127,1
69,75,141,4,127,169
2010 DATA 8,141,2,127,169,192,141,5,12
7,169,0,141,6,127,169,13,141,199,127,1
73,48,2,133,2,173
2020 DATA 49,2,133,3,160,4,177,2,141,1
05,28,72,200,177,2,141,106,28,133,3,10
4,133,2,169,40
2030 DATA 72,160,192,173,255,255,153,6
,127,136,153,6,127,173,105,28,24,105,4
0,141,105,28,144,3,238
2040 DATA 106,28,136,208,229,162,80,16
9,3,157,66,3,169,8,157,74,3,169,0,157,
75,3,76,154,28
2050 DATA 80,58,0,169,151,157,68,3,169
,28,157,69,3,32,86,228,162,80,169,11,1
57,66,3,169,0
2060 DATA 157,68,3,169,127,157,69,3,16
9,200,157,72,3,169,0,157,73,3,32,86,22
8,162,80,169,12
2070 DATA 157,66,3,32,86,228,230,2,208
,2,230,3,165,2,141,105,28,165,3,141,10
6,28,104,56,233
2080 DATA 1,176,128,96,0,127,7,127,27,
65,8,27,75,192,0,0,199,127,199,127,13
2085 DATA -1
2090 REM *221 BYTES

```

When you have made your AUTORUN.SYS disk, put it into drive 1, insert LOGO cartridge and switch on the computer. The printer dump program will boot in automatically. Now you can use the PRINTER routine below to print out graphics screens or you can simply use .CALL 7200 while in the Splitscreen mode.

This small program called PRINTER can be used to dump screens but is not essential.

```

TO PRINTER
>FS
>.CALL 7200
END

```

To print a graphics screen with this program simply type PRINTER and it should dump the screen in about a minute. Make sure the ML AUTORUN.SYS is in memory or it will crash.

Those people with other printers can perform simple modifications to the program to enable this to work on their printers. The control codes in the assembly language program (NOTE: see source publication in SLCC library - Editors) can be changed in the places shown. The EPSONS and GEMINI use ESC(27)A(65)(8) to set the line spacings and ESC(27)K(75)(192)(0) to prepare the printer for bit image graphics and (13) for carriage return and line feed. In the DATA statements of the BASIC program, these are:

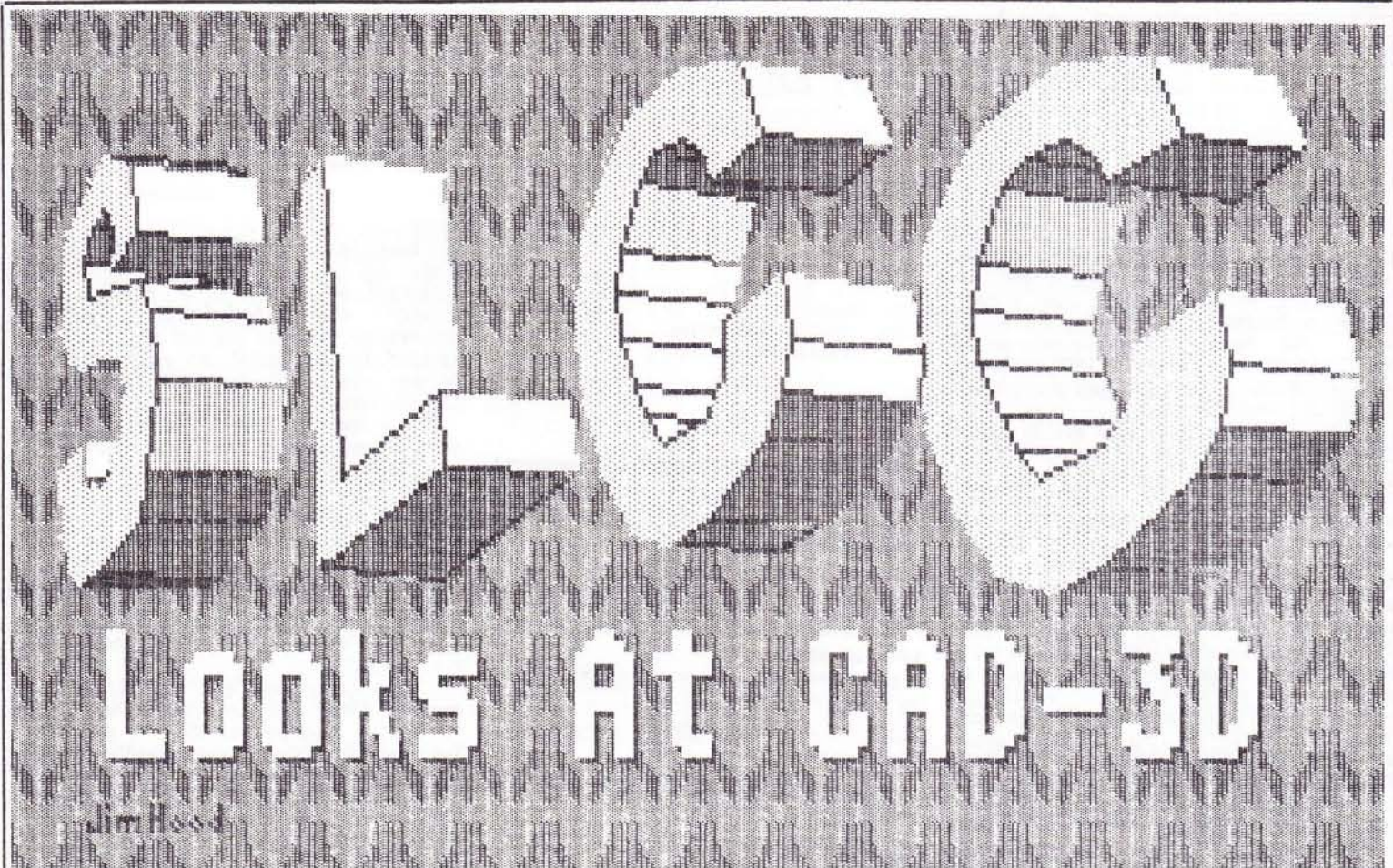
```

ESC(27) - 8th byte in Line 2000
A(65) - 16th byte in Line 2000
K(75) - 21st byte in Line 2000
(8) - 1st byte in Line 2010
(192) - 6th byte in Line 2010
(0) - 11th byte in Line 2010
(13) - last byte in Line 2080

```

If you need to change these, you should consult the control codes for your printer and if any of these instructions are not needed they can be replaced with an NOP instruction.

Northern California
 **ATARI EXPO**
Sept. 20-21
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by Jim Hood

This recent addition to the line of drawing packages for the Atari ST was written by Tom Hudson and is being distributed through Antic Software. It comes packaged with a very good user's guide written by Ian Chadwick.

Cad-3D uses the GEM interface to give us a 3-D modeling program built around the mouse controller.

The starting screen consists of four windows, each occupying a quarter of the screen. Three of these windows present the standard engineering drawing views of objects: top, side and front. The fourth window shows a perspective view. Any one of these windows can be enlarged to full screen by clicking on the GEM size box.

Drawings are made by choosing and sizing primitive objects and joining them together. This is similar to *The (Rambrandt) Solid Object Module* on the 8-bit machines. However, once *The Solid Object Module* generates an object, it exists only as paint pixels on the screen. *CAD-3D* keeps track of individual objects through vector tables and can even provide listings of all vertices and faces.

This is the same method of drawing that is used in *Easy-Draw* and *Graphic Artist* and is what permits those two programs to produce hard copy of higher resolution than the screen. *CAD-3D* uses its vector tables to produce alterable perspective views which allow an object to be seen from any angle. It does not translate these views to higher

resolution output, but it can produce "Super Views" which are full screen pictures that can then be saved as files compatible with *DEGAS*, *C.O.L.R.* or *Neochrome*.

In addition to the basic sphere, torus, cube and wedge that are predefined in the program, the user can draw his own two dimensional shapes and "Extrude" them, giving them a third dimension of uniform thickness. He can also draw a line or set of lines in the "Spin" mode and the program will create an object by "spinning" the shape about an axis.

There is also an animation option. A sequence of views is saved and then played back through a separate program. By changing the position of objects in each view, the illusion of movement is created.

This is a very well done program. The instruction manual leads you through examples to get you familiar with the basic operations, which can be handled almost entirely with the mouse, if desired. The program has enough depth that you will continue to improve and find more things that it is capable of doing as you go along.

As you are probably aware, Tom Hudson also wrote *DEGAS*, one of the first Atari 16-bit paint programs. *Batteries Included* is scheduled to release *DEGAS ELITE* before the end of the year. If Mr. Hudson uses some of the GEM features in that program as effectively as he has in *CAD-3D*, I'm sure we will all be upgrading.



80 Columns ...at last!

by Jerry Telfer

Atari Corporation's czar of 8-bit software, John Skrch, appeared at last month's meeting of our friends at Diablo ACE [DACE]. Skrch brought a little box of delicate gray which caused quite a stir.

It was the long-awaited 80-column adaptor.

Now named the XP801, the box is "conveniently sized to have the same footprint as the 1200 baud modem being developed [for release late this Fall?]," said Skrch.

This is a very smart little box. It connects to any Atari 8-bit via either joystick port 1 or 2. And you don't have to tell it which port you've used because it finds out for itself! The National chip inside was chosen in part because it supports parallel printer output (a standard Centronics port is on the back), and the 8K static RAM will give software publishers room to operate when adapting their software to the 80 column mode.

Among the long list of features this box boasts are half-screen bit-mapped graphics, graphics characters, international characters, text underlining, blinking text, inverse video for either text or whole screen, double high and/or double wide text, and cursor selection among static, blinking, or underline cursors. All current screen editing features are supported by the new box.

And just in case you were wondering, the clarity of the screen display is just SUPERB. In addition to displaying the demo file on a Sanyo monochrome monitor - with wire sharpness - the XP801 was then hooked up to DACE's Commodore color monitor, with results that clearly surpass any of the currently available software-only 80 col. emulators. Use of a color TV via the RF output isn't recommended.

Price for the XP801 is to be "a dollar per column", or \$80 dollars, including the disk-based handler.

Also at the DACE meeting were some of the new staff of five who will produce a revived Atari Explorer magazine. Editor Betsy Staples and technical editor John Jainschigg came to watch user group reaction to the XP801 and other "missing pieces" Skrch was hinting at for "late Fall." (Among these was the fabled 3.5" drive and DOS for the 8-bit machines which seems to die and revive as a projected product on a weekly basis.)

The release version of Star Raiders II with its improved gameplay and gorgeous graphics was also shown, but the starship Enterprise added to the code by nostalgic programmers did not make one of its infrequent appearances.

MORE NEW 8-BIT DISKS!!!

In addition to the regular Disk Of the Month reported elsewhere in the JOURNAL, we have finally completed putting the club's public domain library catalog into a menu-driven database based on a COMPUTE magazine program from a couple of years ago.

This disk is double-sided with Disks Of the Month on the front and all the SLCC Special Disks on the back. We have included the docs for this program so you may use the program for your own disk filing.

SLCC recently made a good buy on blank disks so we are going to pass the savings on to the members. These are top quality double-sided double-density disks that will sell at \$7 in packages of ten. Disks will be sold at this price as long as the supply lasts. Here's your chance to stock up and help SLCC at the same time!

----- James Moran



(EDITOR'S NOTE: this will be a space for anyone needing <HELP> with buggy software, hardware, or programming. Feel free to contribute questions or answers...)

Sirs:

This is a question about word processing.

I use Atariwriter+, an Atari 130XE, and a Star SG-10 printer.

When I print in NLQ (Near Letter Quality) and underline, the words slant "downhill," thus:

This is an underlining test.

Star "technical support" says the problem can be solved, but I can't understand their recommendations.

Thanks,

Dave Kruegel

Dave:

We've seen this before on the SG-10 from James Moran. He found that if you underline the entire line the text doesn't go downhill.

The only sure-fire way to solve this seems to be to avoid underlining in NLQ -- try using italics for emphasis instead, or plan to underline entire lines.

If anyone has figured out how to beat the SG-10 "downhill blues," do let us know how you did it. It would be valuable info for the club, and make a nice article for the JOURNAL. EDITOR.

Mark Blum tells us that blank cartridge boards for the ST are available from Douglas Electronics, 718 Marina Blvd., San Leandro for \$10 apiece. (There are no traces on the boards, so it's mainly for experimenters.)



"Disktop Publishing"

ST Diskmags Sprouting All Over

by Jerry Telfer

A bumper crop of diskmagazines for Atari ST owners is flooding the market this year. Fueled by the over-the-counter success of the Atari ST line of home computers, publishing houses are speeding into circulation magazines aimed at this new market.

The ST is blessed with a large inventory of available programming languages (especially so for such a relatively new machine), but the variety of languages and the fact that the most useful of them are compiled languages creates a publisher's nightmare. It is simply not feasible to rely on "type-in" program listings in the Brave New World of the 68000 CPU. Only a tiny percentage of ST owners have even a modest collection of languages for their machines, and the size of the uncompiled listings for some of the more useful application programs would cause even the most facile touch typists to blanch.

Thus, disk/magazine publications. By combining the printed word with the large data capacity of the 3.5" microdisk, publishers can use each medium to its best advantage. Documentation, the programmer's explanation of technique, and advertisements all work nicely in the magazine portion of the package. Source code listings and executable compiled versions of the programs are easily handled on disk. Grueling typing sessions are eliminated, the market of potential subscribers is expanded, and everyone is happy.

The idea of circulating diskettes with magazines is not new. ANALOG and ANTIC have been doing it for some time as an optional service to the subscribers. Now, however,

begins the era of non-elective combination of the two.

First out of the gate in the disktop publishing race was ANTIC publishing's STart, which made its debut last month with a guaranteed ST crowd pleaser -- a printer driver by superstar programmer Tom Hudson. STart will be published four times each year strictly as a supplement to ANTIC for a \$59.95 subscription price -- which includes (or extends) the monthly ANTIC subscription.

COMPUTE! is joining the race next month with COMPUTE!'s Atari ST Disk & Magazine. They are holding out \$10,000 in prize money in an Atari ST Programming Contest as an incentive to lure contributions for their new publication. COMPUTE!'s Atari ST diskmag will be available six times per year at a \$12.95 newsstand price, or for a \$59.95 subscription price.

ANALOG Computing magazine has not yet decided to spin off a separate ST diskmagazine, continuing instead to offer subscriptions to ANALOG with the optional 5.25" or ST disk. This month's ANALOG has an editorial by publisher Michael J. Des Chenes asking the readers whether they want a separate ST magazine or the expansion of the ST-Log section currently in the middle each month.

Disk/magazine offerings are not the only thing available for the ST, however. ST Applications continues to grow each month, but will probably be pressured by the competition from the other publications with disk editions.

SUN

MON

TUE

WED

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AUGUST 1986

SAN LEANDRO COMPUTER CLUB

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3	4	5 MAIN MEETING DAVE PLOTKIN, GUEST SPEAKER 8 PM-S.L. PUBLIC LIBRARY	6	7	8	9 M SIG 8 PM CALL PHIL: 351-2208
10	11 ST SIG 8 PM CALL BOB: 352-8118	12 ASSEMBLY SIG 8 PM CALL FRANK: 471-8133	13 EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING 8 PM CALL BOB: 352-8118	14	15 JOURNAL DEAD-LINE CALL JERRY: 233-9158	16
17	18	19 ATR8000 SIG & BBS SIG 8 PM CALL MIKE: 482-5061	20	21 BASIC SIG 8 PM CALL GUY: 582-5561	22	23
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31	<p align="center">** ATARI EXPO SEPT. 20-21 **</p>					



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ASSISTANT EDITOR	Mark Blum	483-8166
GRAPHICS ASSISTANT	Jim Hood	534-2197
CALENDAR	Jerry Telfer	233-9158
ADVERTISING SALES	Ron Seymour	537-3183

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Dynamic Duo Strikes Again!

Well, it's August and the Summer seems to be finally coming to a close. As usual, the **Dynamic Duo** has put together another action-packed and fun-filled disk of the month for you. This month, however, is special. In the time it takes to put out one *exceptionally outstanding* disk of the month, we have matched wits with the world of public domain authors and are putting out two disks this month. Yes, not one, but **two quality disks**.

The first disk (or second, if you prefer) is our "bonus" disk for this month... **TOUCH EDIT!** **TOUCH EDIT** is a newly released font editor for the public domain. Dubbed by many as "the ultimate character set/player-missile graphic editor," **TOUCH EDIT** is just that. **TOUCH EDIT** is a full disk, with two editors on one side (one standard and one custom). On the second side are numerous custom fonts, including a demo to show how Lucastilm used custom 16 shade fonts (available with **TOUCH EDIT**) for 'KURONIS KIFT's console. Last but not least on the **TOUCH EDIT** disk are utility programs for including custom fonts and player/missiles in your own BASIC programs!

As for this month's standard DISK of the MONTH, we have, as usual, many programs useful to all types of computer users.

First off, there's the MAC/65 source code listing (plus an assembled version for binary load) for a custom device, "N:". Strange as it may seem, N: does nothing. It is a null device. "WHAT?!?!", says the average computer user, "What will I do with that?!?" Well, for programmers of any sort, this null device is a powerful development tool because it will accept all standard CIO commands and return standard error codes, yet it won't actually carry out the command (like format a disk, say...).

Next on the agenda is an ACTION! listing for a demo of the powerful technique of indexed branching, known commonly as "ON...GOSUB/GOTO" in BASIC.

As a special part of the disk, we have included MPP EXPRESS! (boy these exclamation points are confusing!) Keith Ledbetter revolutionized the telecommunications world with his 850 EXPRESS!, and now this popular telecommunications program is available for MPP users, with full documentation. Also for telecommunications is a three file utility for linking and delinking files for up/downloading. Selected files from a disk can be linked into one large file and then sent and delinked at the other end into its separate files.

We also have two screen dump utilities this month, one in LOGO (from this month's SLCC JOURNAL) and one in Assembler source code. The Assembler dump can be assembled and run under BASIC and controlled with the SHIFT+CTRL+INV (Atari logo key) combination. Full ATASCII translation is provided.

Well, that's about it for this month, along with a few sound and graphic demos on the disk. See you at the meeting!

Mike Sawley

CARINA BBS REVIEW

A few months ago I mentioned that a new BBS program was in the works for the 8 bit Atari line. It is called CARINA BBS and is written by Jerry Horanoff of the Atari Club of the Palm Beaches, FL. Well, I'm glad to announce that Jerry has released a first version of his program (priced at \$69.95 shipping and tax included).

For your \$69.95, you get two disks in standard Atari DOS 2.0 format, a users manual (already printed and bound) and a registration card. The disks contain all the current modules needed to place your BBS online including a complete set of text, menu, and help files.

The hardware that you use for your BBS is pretty much up to you. The modules of CARINA are written in good old Atari BASIC. You should try and get Rev. C if at all possible (automatic if you use a 130XE). I have also found that the programs will run just fine with OSS BASIC XL. The ML portions are written according to Atari guidelines so any 8 bit machine with at least 48K of memory will do. You will need to provide your own DOS. Here again, the choice is up to you, as long as standard Atari NOTE and POINT are supported. Since you are not restricted with the DOS that you use, you can also use almost any combination of disk drives. CARINA is already configured for up to 8 drives in any mix of single or double density. The modem/interface you use will be a major consideration. As long as it is an auto-answer type and has an R: device handler available, most any modem should work. CARINA BBS is known to work with the 850, the ATR-8000, the Hayes SmartModems 300/1200/2400 (and TRUE compatibles), the MPP 1000C/E, and the Q modem. It is likely that other interfaces/modems will also work. The 835, 1030 and XM301 do not seem to work at this time.

CARINA BBS will also work with the 130XE RAMDisk, in addition to the properly done upgrades. In fact, a lot of data needed by CARINA is held on disk and placing this data on a RAMDisk will be a major factor in the quick response of your BBS. The RAMDisk need not be DB: if you choose.

The caller will find that this BBS is unlike any other Atari BBS he/she has ever seen. Those callers that like to jump in and start hitting the [F] and [D] keys will become rather frustrated. WORDS are used rather than one letter commands. These words can be strung together in various

combinations to form phrases so that you can move rapidly about the BBS. This is similar to command stacking that is found on a FoReM BBS. However, this command stacking is taken to another level and beyond by stacking the phrases. For the novice user, you can still follow prompts by entering single words at a time. There are also a large number of macros built into the program. These macros will type entire words for you at the stroke of a single [CONTROL] plus [KEY] combination.

Sound complicated? It is at first, but with a little effort you will find that you can do things that no other BBS will allow. For example, in a single input, you can tell the CARINA BBS to...READ NEW in ALL, POST to MARK ROSE in E-MAIL, POST to JACK TRAMIEL in RUMORS, STATUS, LOGOFF.

As you can see, in one input, you can set the flow of your entire session. The only problem is that you have to be fairly certain about what you want to do. It does not seem possible to cancel the command string once started. You can abort entering the above messages and such, but you cannot stop the BBS from checking your status, for example. Thankfully, you are asked "Are you sure?" before the BBS will log you off.

The message editor has all the needed functions of edit, list, delete, insert and such. You can also abort, restart and change the title if you like.

The way CARINA handles the message bases is quite flexible as well. You can have any number of message bases online as long as you can fit them on your data disks. They can be on any drive as well. They are set according to access level, so that if a caller has an access level equal to or greater than the message base, he will be able to read and post in them. The lower access level callers will not know of their existence. You also have the choice of creating the E-Mail section or not, and routing FEEDBACK to the printer or to a dedicated message base.

The file transfer section of CARINA BBS is rather straight forward. The files are cataloged by language and type for you/by you. Here again, words are used. Sample input might be: DIRECTORY of BASIC UTILITIES, DIRECTORY of ALL PICTURES, UPLOAD an ACTION DEMO called "NEWKAL" at LEVEL 2.

The X-Modem routines are said to be TRUE X-Modem so you should be able to accommodate ST callers (though I have not tried this) as well as our 8 bit line of Atari computers. There are already file type and language flags built into

CARINA for the ST series. If a file has a DOC or TEXT flag, then you can download it with X-Modem or you can use the PRINT command to get an ASCII dump of the file. All other files are assumed to be either tokenized, binary or some other type that needs special handling and must be downloaded with X-Modem. Files for download must be locked. No matter what the access level of a file, if it is not locked, it will now show up on the file index shown to callers.

MOE: MODEM OPERATING ENVIRONMENT is the real power behind CARINA BBS. This is a ML file that is automatically loaded when you boot your system disk. It contains a wealth of subroutines that redirects all input/output through the modem and keyboard simultaneously, performs macros, U/L and D/L routines, holds the disk buffer for those routines, and much more. There is also the ANNEX file. This is an extension to MOE that provides subroutines for the BBS that are not related to anything but the BBS itself. By making use of MOE and the ANNEX, you are able to add to/alter CARINA BBS with ease. This is not a "Construction Set" type of arrangement. Rather you need to create your own program to do what you want. In creating your program, you are free to make use of all the utilities that are built into MOE. Does this sound formidable? I suppose to some this will be, but the open arrangement of MOE and ANNEX, and the COMPLETE documentation that is included should get you well on your way. For example, if you want to check to see if a caller has hung up on you, simply set a BASIC TRAP. If error 255 is returned, then MOE is telling you that a carrier is no longer present. Want to know if a block of data has been sent correctly during X-Modem file transfer? The number returned by the X-Modem routines in MOE will tell you this automatically after each block. You simply have to use IF/THEN to decide if you need to send the block again, abort the transfer, or if the final block has been sent.

I could go on with more examples, but there are just too many of them to list here. Again, the documentation is very complete on this subject, including examples in Atari BASIC.

I said earlier that a few areas need polishing. First, the names of the various message bases and data bases use the actual disk file names. This means that you must restrict the titles to no more than eight characters. While there is nothing really wrong with this, I feel a bit limited in the names you can assign to these

areas of the BBS.

Second, the listing generated by the DIRECTORY command will list all files with the type and language flags requested. This can be a rather long list if you have high density drives and a caller has requested ALL files (greedy little tyke, eh?). It also seems a bit on the slow side since a search is made for a filename, the matching name is sent out the modem and then the search is continued. I feel it might be better if the program could place all matches found in the buffer created by MOE until a page worth has accumulated (perhaps 14 or so filenames). The buffer could then be sent with a prompt at the end of each page that would allow the caller to download a file, continue with the search, or return to the main prompt. One might get fancy here and allow files to be marked for later downloading.

These last two gripes of mine are rather serious. The manual clearly states that one should never simply copy message base files around from disk to disk because the index files hold NOTE and POINT information to the various messages. If you move a base to a new disk and don't place it exactly in the correct spot, the base will crash. [There is no problem in duplicating a disk using the Atari DOS J command]. There will be a time though, that a bad sector [or other physical damage] happens to your disk and you will not be able to duplicate the entire disk. What then? You will have to recreate all your message bases on that disk or use a back up which might be a few days old. I feel there needs to be a utility similar to the FoReM MESSBLD that will read the message bases and make a new set of NOTE/POINT data files.

This other serious gripe is related to the password file. The >al states that you need to reserve a certain amount of disk space for this file. While this is normal, you also need to estimate how many active passwords you are going to maintain. If you later find a need to expand your password file, you will have to start it over. You cannot append new data to it. It would be nice if CARINA would support the Atari APPEND command.

So there you have a totally new approach to placing an Atari BBS online. I am not sure how well this program will be accepted by the general Atari user. I plan to have this program running on our Key System in the very near future. I also hope that you will take the time to explore the program and learn how to use the commands. I think you will be most impressed!

July Minutes...

July 1, 1986

Our July meeting was called to order by President Bob Barton at 8pm. Bob started with several announcements, the first of which covered a new policy for changing the time or date of club business or SIG meetings. Meetings will only be changed when necessary and special notice will be posted in the SLCC JOURNAL. So unless there is a posted change all meetings will be held on their regular dates and at their normal time.

President Barton called on Mike Morrow, the Pascal SIG leader, for information on this new SIG. Mike stated that the SIG currently had limited meeting space and would be limited to members who were presently programming in Pascal. At this time there is only room for seven to ten people. Those members interested should contact Mike Morrow for further details.

There will be a Special meeting of all officers both past and present and all SIG leaders. This will be a one time only meeting so the president asked each one to make a special effort to attend. The meeting will be at 7pm on Tuesday July 15th at the San Leandro Library.

The President has appointed Jim Hood and himself as representatives to a meeting of the Bay Area user groups who are working with ATARI Corp. to set up an ATARI EXPO to be held in September. There will be support from ATARI in both finances and manpower for this ATARI-only show. All plans are tentative at this time and as soon as a location and positive date are decided all members will be notified.

The initial try by the club to set up a C SIG is not going well and more interested members are needed. If you are one of those interested in programming your ST in C contact the President.

ANALOG magazine in their August issue has an article on the West Coast Computer Faire by Matt Ratcliff that credits the club and the SLCC booth at the Faire as one of the best.

New hardware from ATARI was discussed at length but dates for release are still up in the air. The IBM emulator for the ST seems likely for late 1986 release. [Nov.-Dec.]

Program Chairman Dick Scott introduced BILL DYCK from B & L DESIGNS. Bill was here tonight to demonstrate a new program that they have been working on for the past two years. This program "The DESIGNER" is currently in file form but the final version is planned for a bank-select cartridge.

The DESIGNER is a cabinet design program. This program is best used with a specially designed mouse on the eight bit ATARIS. By using vector graphics and this mouse you are able to design any number of different cabinets. The designing is done on the computer screen and plots out the faceframe of a cabinet. After the basic design is finished, dimensions are added and the results can be saved to disk. The program, using the design you have made, will then create a parts cutting list, a best cut diagram using your available wood, and also will create a cost list using your prices so you can make a reliable estimate. Using a plotter [Bill had a \$150 one] the program will plot out your new cabinet complete with dimensions. Further information may be had by calling Bill at (408)263-7139.

Software chairman Cliff and Mark gave a short demonstration of the 8-bit disk of the month. Highlights of this month's disk are several graphics utilities, a new text reader which will make a lot of friends, a Micro Illustrator slide show program, a picture and a couple of new games.

After a short break Dick Scott introduced the second speaker JOHN HENSON, the editor of a new disk based magazine "ALADDIN". This new idea in magazines is comprised of 3 double-sided disks in a plastic case, all of which are of premium quality. A general interest magazine, ALADDIN is written in BASIC and will be published every two months. Two years have gone into the planning of this magazine which had its premiere issue in June of this year. Some of the contents will be: hardware and software reviews, art, music, programming, movie and video reviews, brain teasers, foods and of course advertisements.

The ALADDIN magazine is starting out on an ATARI because John is an ATARI owner and the machine has the best graphics. John proceeded in giving a very impressive demonstration of his new magazine that had a large number of members subscribing for future issues. The subscription costs \$79.95 per year for six issues. As an inducement for club members John gave the subscribers a free copy of the premiere issue.

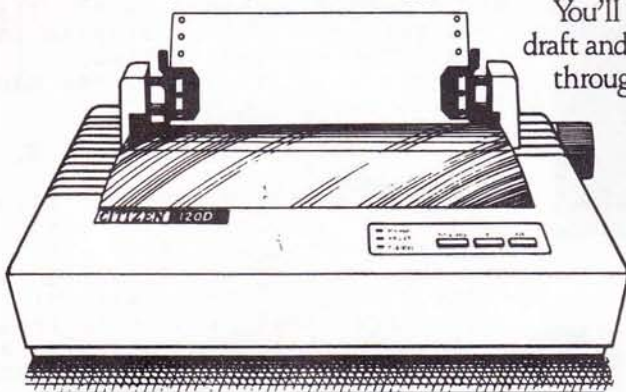
The clubs 8" drives that were to be auctioned off did not receive any bids.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 10:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Moran
Secretary

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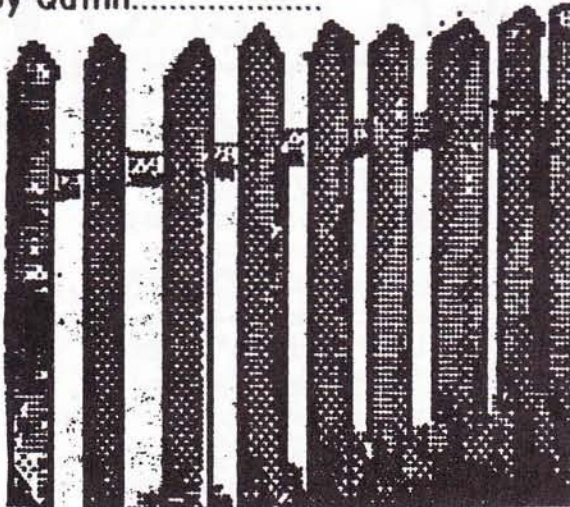
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The Back Fence

.....by Quinn.....



MIRAGE DOESN'T LIVE THERE ANYMORE...

Someone said that Mirage Concepts, (H&D-Base, H&D-Forth, etc.) have stopped answering their phones. Sure enough, calls to both their Fresno main number and (800) number get a "no longer in service" message from the phone company. Also, Fresno directory assistance has no listing for Mirage anything. One local dealer mumbled something about Mirage having "some, er, temporary, um, trouble with the phones..." Huh? Another dealer says, nope, they gone. Still selling the products? Yep. Support? "We'll do what we can from here."

Too bad, Mirage. Requiescat In Pacem. (For you programmer types, that's Latin for "Have a nice eternity.")

PUT A LITTLE DRIVE IN YOUR LIFE...

If anyone is interested in a third-party floppy drive package like Shanner's, but one that works, there is reason to believe that a company here on the Coast is thinking seriously about it. Raise your voices to the heavens, or at least to Atari's ST BBSs. It is known that the suspect company watches that board for signs of interest.

DIGITAL WHO?

Have you wondered why we haven't seen GEM-Write, GEM-Draw, GEM-Paint or GEM anything else on the ST dealer's shelves? Word through the gripe-vine has it that DRI, those wonderful folks who brought us the desktop and all its terrific limitations, don't want to be linked to a toy computer like the ST. They would rather be seen as a serious operating system house tied to a technological leader like the IBM PC.

If GEM-anything happens for the ST, apparently it's going to be up to Atari to come up with bucks for a license and do the development themselves. Given the well known philosophy of spending over at the Borregas Avenue Bit Bashing Club (Atari), we may sooner see the Hades Invitational Ice Skating Competition.

Other topics concerning that GEM of a DOS...there is indeed a built in limitation on the number of directories (folders) that you can have on a hard disk (about 40, give or take 20), and that may or may not be a contributing factor in how long it's taken Atari to get the hard drive out. (So much for DRI as a serious operating system house.)

Knowledgeable sources expect a fix via a new set of ROMS by the first of next year. Until such a fix occurs, though, a hard disk is of very marginal usefulness. To remain consistent with DRI's "desktop metaphor" and the cute little icons, it's like having a four drawer file cabinet with five large file folders permanently stapled in each drawer. From their perspective, I guess that's reasonable. After all, how many games do you need on one toy computer?

AVAST, YE PIRATES...

The software piracy issue is alive and well and was recently seen in a Compuserve on-line conference of ST software developers. At the heart of the matter seems to be the attitude on the part of some software developers that the only reason they aren't rich is that everyone is stealing their software. (The whole transcript of the conference is available for D/L on Compuserve.) To the developers' credit, they agreed that copy protection (at least in software) is not a solution to the problem (and, yes, there IS a problem). To their detriment, there was evidence of some less than charitable (to be charitable) attitudes among them.

One conference participant (whose name shall remain confidential but whose initials are Mark Skapinker from Batteries Included) actually offered the philosophy (paraphrased) that people are basically dishonest and given the chance, they will steal anything they can get their sticky little fingers on. (Does that make developers dishonest, too, or aren't they people?)

Some of the developers also espoused the idea that "the guy next door" who casually copies a program for a friend is the biggest cause of lost revenue. Acknowledged, there's a lot of bootlegged, pirated, stolen software circulating in the user community.

I'm neither defending nor condoning that. I'm proposing that the reason for that phenomenon is not the basic dishonesty of humanity, but a perceived lack of value in the software. I think that many of the people who have a copy of a program wouldn't buy it anyway. That's not lost revenue, it's weak sales. And weak sales don't come from piracy nearly as much as from bad software, poor support, incomprehensible documentation and arrogant software companies.

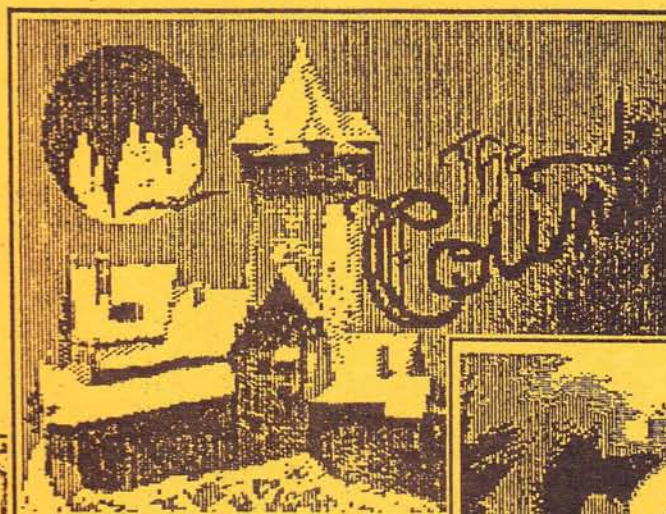
Maybe if software companies spent as much time perfecting their products as they do protecting them, they would find the world a much more profitable place.

As usual, the opinions expressed herein are mine and not necessarily those of the SLCC, the SLCC JOURNAL or its staff. For a moderate fee, they may be available for lease or purchase. Call for details.

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A Reminder.....

Last month's JOURNAL contained a short member survey aimed at updating the club's information about its membership. Apparently, many of those JOURNALS still contain those surveys. Now, we're sure that you folks just forgot to bring them to the meeting -- what with busy lives, etc.

However, those surveys are needed by SLCC and the JOURNAL. Without them, the club leadership doesn't have an adequate picture of your needs, and the JOURNAL doesn't have an accurate idea of what you'd like to see us publish.

Ergo, inside you will find a reprint of said survey. **PLEASE FILL IT OUT AND BRING IT TO THE MEETING.** It will help us to make SLCC a better club, and one which reflects your interests.

OOPS!

To our great embarrassment, last month's article on the ACTION! programming language was mistakenly credited to Mike Sawley rather than to the correct author, DAVID FOSTER. We'll try to avoid such errors in the future. -- the editors

August Meeting

by Dick Scott

Our next meeting will feature DAVID PLOTKIN, an author of several games written in ACTION!. Dave, who is also a contributing editor for ANTIC magazine, will have some disks available for sale (\$10 each) after the demonstration.

There will be a repeat demo of "The New Aladdin" disk publication to accommodate those who had to leave the July meeting early.

JOHN HENSON, the editor-in-chief of Disk Publications, Inc. will give SLCC \$10 for every subscription to "The New Aladdin" purchased by our members during the August meeting or thereafter, providing they mention they heard about it from SLCC. (See ad inside for details)

Strategic Simulations, Inc. wrote to say that they are sorry that they can't send a representative to the SLCC meeting, but they are sending a couple of their new releases for review. Meanwhile, if anyone has a problem with one of their games, give them a call on their hotline, (415) 964-1200.

SLCC Journal

P.O. Box 1525, San Leandro, CA 94577



Next Meeting:

August 5, 1986 8pm
San Leandro Community Library
300 Estudillo Avenue
Guest: Dave Plotkin

TO:

186

87/05/08

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94577